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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 20 July 2017, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Shava ..... (Zimbabwe)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 5: High-level segment (*continued*) (E/2017/33, E/2017/50, E/2017/64, E/2017/65, E/2017/66, E/2017/69 and E/2017/72)

(b) High-level policy dialogue with international financial and trade institutions

Panel discussion: "Current trends in economic and trade policy and the advancement of sustainable development"

1. **Mr. Bhattacharya** (Senior Fellow for Global Economy and Development at Brookings Institute), moderator, said that the international community had reached a pinnacle in international cooperation and multilateral aspirations in 2015, with the development of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Those instruments clearly defined international commitments and the trajectories to deliver on them in the remaining 13 years, recognizing that globalization and global cooperation would be essential to building the foundations of inclusive and sustainable growth. Nevertheless, the positive view of globalization had been increasingly called into question over the past two years, with the acknowledgement that it left people behind. It might therefore be necessary to rethink the role of key institutions. The perspectives of international financial and trade institutions were an important part of that dialogue, in particular their view of the challenges and the need to adjust trajectories to that new reality.

2. He asked the panellists to discuss which emerging trends in global trade and economic policy posed the greatest risk to advancing sustainable development, how the 2030 Agenda could address the actual and perceived challenges of globalization and what role multilateral institutions could play in devising solutions to global economic and social challenges, including slow global growth, inequality and economic and social imbalances.

3. **Mr. Wu** Hongbo (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs), panellist, said that the findings of the report entitled "World Economic and Social Survey 2017: Reflecting on seventy years of development policy analysis" (E/2017/50) indicated that the old approach to cooperation could not fulfil the transformative potential of the 2030 Agenda, which required an intersectoral perspective, integrated approaches to collaboration, the inclusion of all stakeholders and a better understanding of national situations combined with tailored actions.

4. Introducing the report entitled "World economic situation and prospects as of mid-2017" (E/2017/65), he said that there had been some encouraging signs of revival following the sharp slowdown in world trade and global economic growth in 2016. Industrial production had picked up; world trade was reviving, driven by stronger demand in East Asia; and economic sentiment had generally improved, especially in developed economies. According to the report, world gross product was expected to expand by 2.7 per cent in 2017 and 2.9 per cent in 2018. Despite those advances, however, stronger economic activity was not evenly spread across States and regions. There had been a general uptick in growth in many of the large developed economies, improved prospects in many economies in transition and continued robust growth in East and South Asia. Nevertheless, the strength of recovery remained insufficient in many regions for rapid progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Average incomes in several parts of Africa and South America had declined in 2016 and were projected to increase only marginally in 2017 and 2018. Additionally, the report had downgraded forecasts for some of the poorest States. The gross domestic product (GDP) of the least developed countries was expected to rise by just 4.7 per cent in 2017 and 5.3 per cent in 2018, significantly below the Sustainable Development Goal target of at least 7 per cent growth. Without stronger growth, nearly 35 per cent of the population of least developed countries could remain in extreme poverty by 2030. High food prices in many States also raised short-term concerns for the more vulnerable members of society. The international community must therefore do more to deliver on its promise to leave no one behind.

5. A high degree of uncertainty in the international policy environment continued to cloud the outlook, especially for world trade, migration, development aid and climate targets. Those global challenges required a global response, but commitments to strengthen international policy coordination appeared to be waning. Challenges to the prevailing global economic, financial and trade system had stemmed largely from the belief that economic benefits were not shared evenly across States and population groups and were accompanied by inequality, financial instability and labour market and trade adjustments. The rising discontent with the uneven distribution of gains from globalization had fuelled more protectionist and inward-looking views in some economies, increasingly undermining multilateral engagements and

international cooperation in several domains. International coordination was essential for better aligning the multilateral trading system with social and environmental targets, expanding international public finance and official development assistance (ODA), supporting climate finance and clean technology transfer, and addressing the challenges posed by large movements of refugees and migrants. The ability of the international community to meet the current challenges would have far-reaching effects on the future of the global economy, globalization and sustainable development, as well as the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

6. **Mr. Mohieldin** (Senior Vice-President for the 2030 Development Agenda, United Nations Relations, and Partnerships at the World Bank Group), panellist, said that the achievement of the 2030 Agenda at the country level rested on three pillars: faster, sustainable and inclusive growth; continued investment in people; and safety nets and mechanisms to provide resilience in the face of disaster. To that end, the international community must mobilize resources to provide adequate financing and better data that would guide policymakers and improve governance and accountability in order to ensure the proper implementation of policies and institutional reforms at the country level. The recovery had been well underway since mid-2016 but remained fragile. While global figures received a lot of attention, it was also important to focus on country-level statistics.

7. Trade was central to efforts to end global poverty. Increased trade integration had helped to drive economic growth in advanced and developing economies in the second half of the twentieth century, lifting millions out of poverty. From 1988 to 2008, world trade as a share of GDP had increased to more than 50 per cent, and the average income had grown by 24 per cent globally. Trade could also boost productivity in both advanced and developing countries. One study had found that productivity increased nearly 1.25 per cent for every 1 per cent increase in trade openness. Additionally, open trade brought important but often overlooked benefits to lower-income households by offering consumers more affordable goods and services. Another study examining the hypothetical outcomes of halting all trade had found that the resulting price increases would reduce the real income of the poorest 10 per cent by as much as 46 per cent in Japan, 57 per cent in Brazil and 69 per cent in the United States.

8. Despite the positive impact of trade on growth, productivity, job opportunities and the well-being of lower-income households, many people felt that they had not experienced the benefits of globalization and some blamed trade. A recent study of the United States labour market had found that regions exposed to import competition from Asia saw increased unemployment, decreased labour force participation and lower wages. Nevertheless, changes in technology, automation and a lack of necessary skills would have a profound impact on the changing nature of jobs. States must have smart policies, such as openness to trade, a strong safety net and continuous education, and education must prepare students for the jobs of the future. As certain sectors shrank and others expanded, improvements in labour mobility would benefit those who had been left behind by globalization through training programmes, job search assistance and relocation benefits. The World Bank encouraged policymakers in developing countries to consider policies that supported labour mobility in long-term planning.

9. While technology could be seen as a threat in some areas in the short term, it provided better access to financial markets at a lower cost through mobile money services and digital finance. However, it was important to determine whether technology was providing access to savings and opportunities, or simply debt. Such technology must therefore be accompanied by investments in financial literacy, regulations and consumer protection.

10. There were many advances in social protection schemes and safety nets, such as employment protection in European Union member States and conditional cash transfers in Latin America, Asia and Africa. In partnership with such institutions as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Bank helped States to design and implement related policies. The forthcoming joint report was a good example of how those institutions were working together to help strengthen global trade through smart policies that could work for everyone.

11. **Mr. Agah** (Deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO)), panellist, accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that the multilateral trading system was the most important tool to date to ensure predictability, security and fairness in international economic relations, and had responded effectively to shifts towards protectionism in the aftermath of the financial crisis. Trade could also provide the necessary resources to achieve development goals. For example, the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation had made trade more inclusive, its Information Technology Agreement had been

expanded to promote the diffusion of technology and the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights had been amended to allow better access to medicine. In Nairobi, export subsidies in agriculture had been eliminated to reduce the distortions affecting developing-country producers.

12. The gap between developed and developing countries had narrowed as the latter's share of trade had significantly increased. Further integration into the multilateral trading system would improve access to new markets, technologies and investments, which were necessary for trade to better contribute to inclusive growth, poverty reduction and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

13. However, trade also posed challenges. While empirical evidence demonstrated that, in general, trade provided opportunities for job growth and better-paying jobs and improved skills and technology, thereby increasing productivity and competitiveness, it also required workers and companies to adjust. If they were unable to do so, and Governments could not implement policies to facilitate that adjustment, people were left behind. Additionally, some sectors of the economy, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, had difficulty reaching international markets, and some advanced economies had seen stagnating incomes and a prolonged economic downturn. The international community must therefore recognize the situation, which fuelled concerns about people being left behind by globalization, and address its causes, rather than increase protectionist measures.

14. Trade measures alone could not address those challenges. Far-reaching multilateral cooperation should be enhanced. States must implement policies to assist people in acquiring the necessary skills to access new jobs, improve the business environment in order to attract investment and reduce trade costs and barriers. Approaches must be tailored to the specific political and economic situations of States and mainstreamed into national development policy objectives. The international community must change the narrative, which was dominated by anti-globalization sentiment, to focus more on the success stories and lessons learned. Developed countries needed to support growth in developing countries by keeping their markets open so that the developing country markets could in turn support new trade flows of developed-country exports.

15. **Mr. Bhattacharya** (Senior Fellow for Global Economy and Development at Brookings Institute) said that, given the present controversy over trade, the WTO dispute settlement mechanism was a powerful response to proposals for unilateral action. It must be well-publicized and serve as a response to the charge of unfair trade practices.

16. **Ms. Durant** (Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)), panellist, said that developed countries were seeing an increase in populism, protectionism and xenophobia, which challenged the solidarity that was needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in financing. The 2030 Agenda was shared by all. Paradoxically, the developing countries were now attempting to convince the developed countries of the benefits of globalization that was inclusive and did not leave behind the poorest and least developed countries or leave workers with bad prospects, as that drove them to support populism. States must therefore focus on export development and trade reform. UNCTAD worked with States to increase and strengthen the capacity, knowledge, expertise and tools of stakeholders in least developed countries; finance and support trade; facilitate investments; and develop policies to promote regulated competition and protect the environment. Export policies must also integrate sustainable development and environmental goals.

17. While some States had focused their efforts on promoting protectionism, it was the austerity measures adopted after the financial crisis that were holding back global demand. Financial regulations remained unstable and unsustainable. The overemphasis on monetary policy and fiscal austerity had prevented the revival of global demand, which was badly needed. Unfortunately, with interest rates increasing in the United States, the international community risked returning to business as usual.

18. Technology was rapidly changing, but its benefits were not shared equally. Developing countries must be assisted in reducing the digital gap, especially in growing sectors such as e-commerce. In 2015, e-commerce worldwide was valued at more than $25 trillion, but there was only one developing country among the top ten digital economies. Africa therefore desperately needed infrastructure connectivity; electronic payment systems, which could also help to combat corruption; trade logistics; and legal frameworks for Internet security. In that regard, UNCTAD had launched its eTrade for All initiative. The Industry 4.0 revolution would completely change the development options available to developing countries. The least developed countries in Africa had hoped to profit from the rising costs of labour in China and other States, but automation and artificial intelligence had made that scenario less likely, and the growing youth population was left to ponder the prospects for future jobs.

19. The international community must therefore honour its commitments under the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and make further investment commitments to assist least developed countries in meeting their needs and overcoming obstacles, especially in the banking sector. However, commitments in other areas, such as migration and displacement and climate finance, must also not be forgotten.

20. **Mr. Nolan** (Deputy Director of the Strategy, Policy and Review Department of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)), panellist, accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that the global growth recovery that had been consistently forecast in recent years had failed to materialize. World output was picking up slowly and would probably reach 3.75 per cent in 2017, but remained well below pre-crisis levels. The large shortfall in low-income developing countries was troubling. Medium growth prospects were subdued across advanced countries and many developing countries. There were also many significant medium-term risks to the ongoing moderate recovery, such as policy uncertainty in major advanced economies, the resurgence of protectionism and the high leverage of capital in many advanced and emerging economies.

21. Interest rates had been low for a long time in advanced economies, and inflation rates were set to rise but would remain very low by historical standards. Low interest rates were essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as they provided important opportunities for the South to access funds at lower costs. There had been large, albeit volatile, capital flows from the North to many emerging market economies. The public debt burden was very high in advanced economies, with a weighted average of over 100 per cent. In emerging and developing economies, debt was on an upward trend, and up to 40 per cent of low-income countries were beginning to approach a high risk of debt distress as measured by the World Bank-IMF Debt Sustainability Framework. International trade growth remained sluggish, but there had been a steady rise over time in flows of remittances to developing countries, which currently dwarfed ODA and had become an important and stable source of foreign exchange earnings for many developing countries.

22. Inequality across the global population, as measured by the Gini coefficient, was steadily declining, which reflected the rapid pace of growth in some large emerging markets and developing economies. On the other hand, inequality within States was rising, particularly in advanced economies, jeopardizing their ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and threatening the sustainability of the international trading system, which had been central to the impressive performance of the global economy over the last 50 years. Growth had been slower than predicted at the third International Conference on Financing for Development in 2015. Cumulative GDP growth for lower-income countries for the period from 2015 to 2020 had been revised downward, from 35 per cent to 26 per cent. Growth was even slower for many commodity exporters in low-income countries. The lower growth projections would make the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals commensurately more difficult. The forecast for emerging market economies had also been revised downward, while the forecast for China and India remained unchanged.

23. Turning to policies that could support the 2030 Agenda, he said that the key priorities of advanced economies were reinvigorating productivity growth and tackling rising inequality by broadening opportunities for all. With respect to the challenges facing developing countries, the policy recommendations in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda remained fully relevant. The national policies of developing countries must aim to boost domestic revenue mobilization. Governments must take action to reform tax administrations and policies, and development partners must support those efforts by providing technical assistance and capacity-building. There must also be a transparent, stable and predictable investment climate for private firms of all sizes. The Agenda also strongly emphasized inclusive essential public services, gender equality and full access to financial services. Since 2015, those issues had gained even greater prominence in the international policy agenda, and the international community must ensure that the appropriate measures were implemented.

24. In order to address systemic issues, policies must support trade openness and strengthen the global financial architecture. Significant progress had been made in implementing global financial sector regulations in recent years, although more work needed to be done in areas such as shadow banking regulations. The global financial safety net had also been strengthened. In 2016, the IMF governance reform of 2010 had finally been implemented, substantially strengthening the core financing of IMF and its financial safety net. The Fund had developed closer ties with regional financial institutions to facilitate coordination in handling shocks. Additionally, international tax cooperation must be scaled up. The international community must assist tax

authorities in low-income countries in accessing information and taking advantage of new initiatives, some of which would require significant capacity. Infrastructure gaps in developing countries must be addressed and private investment to fund those projects must be facilitated. Governments had agreed to change policy environments, and development partners had agreed to develop a pipeline of bankable projects, provide technical support for feasibility studies, negotiate complex contracts, manage projects and develop blended finance.

25. Multilateral institutions must implement their mandates and deepen analytical and diagnostic work on issues such as boosting productivity growth, increasing the female labour force participation rate and improving the quality of opportunities for all. They must also collaborate more effectively across institutions to take advantage of their various areas of expertise. IMF must continue to give high priority to the prevention of financial crises and support States facing balance of payments difficulties. The Fund must also expand its support for capacity development, especially in the areas of taxation, public financial management, infrastructure policy support and financial stability.

26. **Mr. Frantz** (Deputy Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)), guest speaker, said that the global outlook had brightened in the past year, but it was not good enough to reduce persistent and rising inequality, which was one of the main obstacles to sustainable development. In OECD countries, real median incomes had not increased in 20 years. The economy could not counteract the technology revolution, which was causing job losses in manufacturing and in specific regions, or cushion economies against geopolitical shocks and the resulting financial instability.

27. In recent decades, OECD tax systems had tended to shift the tax burden onto labour and become less progressive. Globalization had facilitated tax evasion and avoidance, fed the dominance of leading firms in some sectors and allowed the rise of market distortions and unfair trade practices. The combination of technological change and globalization had put many jobs at risk, contributing to the polarization of labour markets. As a result, many people were angry about the effects of globalization and the growing concentration of wealth in the hands of the elites. There were increasing calls for protectionism in some Governments, which had begun to discuss tariffs, quotas and subsidies as a way of saving domestic jobs. However, protectionism would only serve to decrease the competitiveness of domestic firms in export markets, cause a drop in GDP and hold back the economic growth required to support the Sustainable Development Goals.

28. In order to combat those challenges, OECD was designing policies rooted in inclusive growth and well-being. The international system must provide a more level playing field. Domestic reforms must therefore boost competition, job creation, skills and innovation. On a macro level, policymakers must employ the full range of international economic cooperation tools in order to ensure high standards of conduct for businesses, fair and transparent cross-border tax arrangements, a reduction in corruption and respect for labour and environmental standards. Targeted policies must assist those at risk of being left behind in seizing new opportunities. Multilateral organizations must help define globally acceptable investment criteria to allow investment funds and businesses to target sustainable business opportunities, particularly in the developing world. They must work with Governments to adopt those criteria at the national and local levels.

29. **Mr. Bhattacharya** (Senior Fellow for Global Economy and Development at Brookings Institute) said that the challenges facing the international community were daunting. Weak and uneven growth, which increased vulnerability and inequality, had led to structural challenges and must be addressed. The international community must also focus on sustainable growth and recognize the challenge posed by planetary boundaries, including climate change. A recent OECD report entitled "Investing in Climate, Investing in Growth" stated that climate action should be seen as an opportunity and not as a cost. A low-carbon growth path was the only one for a sustainable future. The uncertainty surrounding the impact of technology, especially artificial intelligence, clouded the future of jobs. The risks were present in both the developed and developing world, and artificial intelligence raised significant new issues in regulatory policy.

30. While the challenges were unprecedented, so were the opportunities to shape new investment in a benign interest-rate environment with the knowledge acquired from recent decades. In order to adapt to the modern multipolar world, multilateral institutions must be more democratic. While IMF and World Bank reforms were significant, they did not go far enough. True multilateral solutions required multilateral institutions to be deeply rooted in multilateral governance. There was much to be learned from the governance of twenty-first-century institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. International

cooperation was the only way to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

31. **Ms. Asare** (Ghana) said that in order to foster long-term quality investment, Ghana focused on increasing the mobilization of domestic public resources and developing and strengthening regulatory frameworks to better align domestic and international business and finance with public goals. The Government had therefore restored microeconomic stability, shifted the focus of economic management from taxation to production, supported business financing, provided incentives for the production of raw materials for industry and strengthened tax administration systems. As result, the World Bank report "Doing Business 2017" had ranked Ghana as the best place to do business in West Africa.

32. The Government was committed to private sector partnerships with a view to accelerating economic growth and prosperity through initiatives that would facilitate the decentralization of business activities, such as the private-led "One District One Factory" initiative. The National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Plan would provide support for businesses in the early stages, including business development services, business incubators and funding for youth-owned businesses. It would also work to improve the unreliable and expensive power supply so that businesses could focus on more productive and innovative issues. Ghana had concluded an investment compact under the Group of 20 "Compact with Africa" initiative to address the constraints inhibiting private sector investment and had signed on to a new subregional initiative to improve economic cooperation, which included a commitment to find solutions to ensure the resilience of cocoa to price volatility in the international market. Ghana had a solid tradition of investment in agro-processing. The financial services and telecommunications sectors were quickly gaining ground, and further opportunities existed in manufacturing, information and communications technology, and tourism.

33. The Government had outlined a strategy to ensure the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063, working with authorities at the national and local levels to determine the extent to which the existing development priorities had aligned with the goals and targets of the two agendas. Approximately 70 per cent of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals were reflected in the current medium-term development framework for 2014 to 2017, and the next three-year framework would fully align with the two agendas. The targets of both agendas had also been incorporated into the long-term development plan, which would be fully funded by budgetary allocations. Adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms would be established to guarantee its implementation.

34. **Mr. Bhattacharya** (Senior Fellow for Global Economy and Development at Brookings Institute) said that there were currently seven African States participating in the G20 Compact with Africa, which had the potential to build partnerships that would bring in private investment, backed by country actions and commitments from other development partners.

35. **Ms. Japple** (International Trade Centre (ITC)) said that inclusive trade was an important tool for achieving the 2030 Agenda and provided many benefits, such as job creation, opportunities for women and youth, quality and choice for consumers and links between economies and communities. However, the benefits of trade had not always reached those in need. It could also make jobs obsolete and create an uneven playing field. ITC was therefore committed to supporting inclusive and sustainable trade that worked for all. The Centre worked with micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries to increase competitiveness by providing practical support, access to trade intelligence and institutional support for national and regional organizations, as well as helping policymakers incorporate a business perspective into the policy process.

36. Women were an important part of inclusive trade. The economic and social empowerment of women led to stronger growth and more prosperous societies, and a trade agenda that specifically recognized and acted on their empowerment could be a strong force for inclusive growth. Under the ITC SheTrades initiative, over 100 trade support institutions around the world had committed to supporting 850,000 women entrepreneurs in accessing international markets. Practical partnerships were also essential to the idea of good trade. Multilateral institutions must implement their mandates and form partnerships that went beyond multilateral organizations. Governments and local and regional institutions were essential to those partnerships in order to ensure that the environment was conducive to good trade and that small firms and women entrepreneurs received the necessary support. The private sector and other United Nations entities could also play a role, making important contributions in their own areas of expertise.

37. **Mr. Conceição** (United Nations Development Programme) said that, in the past, the economy as a whole had made gains that compensated for losses in more technologically advanced sectors, but some

people had been left behind in the transition. Unfortunately, that transition period was now likely to occur at a time when the international community needed to stand behind the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He therefore wished to know how the international community could manage the transition.

38. In the past two decades, there had been a worrisome divergence between economic performance and average household income, affecting both developed and developing countries. Data from the International Labour Organization had shown that increases in labour productivity did not equate to an increase in the standard of living. The declining role of manufacturing also gave cause for concern. Traditionally, economic development occurred through a transition from agriculture to manufacturing, and then from manufacturing to services. However, some developing countries appeared to be transitioning directly from agriculture to services, which were often low-paid and low-skilled. That trend might be exacerbated by technological changes in the future, thereby making development more difficult than in the past. He wondered what paths development could take going forward.

39. **Mr. Frantz** (Deputy Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)) said that the current technological revolution was different from any other in history. For example, the Industrial Revolution had spanned several decades and there had been time to make a transition to new jobs and economies. The speed of the current technological revolution did not provide enough time to make that transition. A recent OECD study had found that education systems in OECD countries could not keep pace with machine learning, which could have significant consequences for labour across the world. Multilateral organizations must address those issues.

40. **Mr. Mohieldin** (Senior Vice-President for the 2030 Development Agenda, United Nations Relations, and Partnerships at the World Bank Group), said that the World Bank was working to identify areas of progress in investment in human capital, including the development of a new human capital index that would begin with early childhood investments in health and education.

41. Even during the Industrial Revolution, the economic changes had outpaced social development, which had arguably led to the First World War. Issues related to social safety nets and protection must therefore be addressed in order to manage shocks. While it was important to consider manufacturing and industrialization, especially in developing countries in the Middle East and Africa, other proposals could be more suitable to the current challenges and opportunities in digitalization and there were many good examples of inclusive growth. For instance, countries such as China, Singapore and Malaysia had managed to accomplish in 30 years what had taken nearly 200 in many European countries.

42. The international community must stress the importance of working with the private sector, whose dynamism and expertise could guide investment while minimizing the cost to tax payers. With the billions to trillions initiative, the World Bank had hoped that ODA and public finance could be leveraged to fund activities for inclusive economic growth. Unfortunately, there had been a decline in private sector contributions to investment and essential infrastructure due to complicated regulations and crowding out by the public sector. The international community should do better in leveraging both the private sector and public money to reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

43. **Mr. Bhattacharya** (Senior Fellow for Global Economy and Development at Brookings Institute) said that moving from billions to trillions might require more sophisticated architecture on blended finance. Employment was made more complex by the fact that people and education systems risked falling behind machines. That situation could also exacerbate inequality, as the owners of the machines would make the money, rather than the large number of people no longer able to compete. For that reason, there had been calls for a basic minimum income. However, that would not be sufficient to address the issue. He wondered what type of national and international cooperation would be needed to establish a policy regime.

44. **Ms. Durant** (Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)) said that, in addition to the challenges posed by technological changes, the transition was too slow and insufficient to address the rapid changes in climate and environmental degradation, which would lead to environmental debt and climate refugees. The international community must also consider the effects of demographic shocks on the relationship between growth and productivity and the nature of employment. The decentralization of the economy was another important issue, especially in least developed countries where the focus was often on large urban centres. Women, youth, migrants and other vulnerable groups should also be included in the quest to find solutions.

45. **Mr. Babajide** (European Union) said that it was important to leverage financing and identify innovative instruments in order to address needs. The European Union and its member States had adapted their development approach to meet the challenges of the 2030 Agenda, and development interventions would focus on assisting countries in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The European Commission had established an investment plan in order to leverage additional contributions from the private and public sectors and support projects and small and medium-sized enterprises that would have difficulty securing funding from banks or institutional investors. The plan, which aimed to raise €44 billion, would target Africa and Europe. The European Union also had experience working with guarantee schemes and de-risking. Since 2007, the Commission had used €3.4 billion of European Union grants to leverage €26 billion in loans to support many projects, including a programme to support women in businesses in Eastern Europe; a wind farm project in Egypt; and a water and sanitation initiative in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

46. The response to challenges should focus on helping countries reach the Sustainable Development Goals and create innovative instruments, like the European investment plan, with a view to generating the trillions that were needed to implement the 2030 Agenda.

47. **Mr. Agah** (Deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO)) said that, from a trade policy perspective, consistency was one important underlying factor of success. In Africa, the direction of policies changed every decade and Governments responded to them without establishing foundations, which caused them to lose any gains they might have made over time. The world would continue to experience economic upheavals and changes in technology, but government policy response needed to be consistent and aligned with national development objectives. In order to use trade as a development tool, States must examine their current and potential future markets and then determine their technology policy, which would in turn guide investments, educational policy and partnerships.

48. The policy analysis and advocacy of multilateral institutions sometimes did not reflect the specific needs of States. Institutions must therefore look beyond a one-size-fits-all solution to determine how best to assist States in achieving their goals. In economies with a weak private sector, he wondered whether it was really possible for the private sector to step in and generate the kind of growth needed to lift millions out of poverty without government involvement.

49. **Mr. Nolan** (Deputy Director of the Strategy, Policy and Review Department of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)) said that substantial technological change, which was often transmitted geographically through international trade, was disruptive, and transitions were often long and painful. The international community already understood the importance of social safety nets, the role of active labour market policies and the need for responsive education systems, although it was easier to implement activities in those areas in an advanced economy. IMF, WTO and the World Bank had released a joint report on making trade an engine of growth for all, which addressed how to manage transitions and support those who failed to benefit from them. The level of social cohesion and a commitment to inclusion determined whether national policies were implemented to manage the transition.

50. A lack of infrastructure and of a business climate represented key obstacles to industrialization in low-income countries. It was not possible to benefit from global value chains without adequate infrastructure. It was therefore important to support infrastructure investment in poor countries, ensure the involvement of the private sector and develop new instruments where required. States already had the desire to increase private sector investment, and development finance agencies had recognized the need to leverage private funds. The current challenge therefore was to determine the appropriate financial instruments. Host-country Governments must undertake the necessary policy reforms, such as electricity tariffs, and development partners must deliver the instruments and technical support.

51. **Mr. Bhattacharya** (Senior Fellow for Global Economy and Development at Brookings Institute) said that, in the context of the 2030 Agenda, infrastructure was essential to both growth and the delivery of basic services. Unfortunately, there were many opportunities that could not be capitalized on and needs that could not be met due to a lack of planning, institutions and governance, as well as a lack of capacity in the private sector at the local level. Additionally, the international community was unable to translate savings into the right kind of finance at the right time, an issue made more complex by the risks associated with infrastructure. The public sector and public institutions, including multilateral and development finance institutions, had a critical role to play in addressing those gaps. In order to deliver on the 2030

Agenda, the international community must double the stock of capital in infrastructure.

52. **Mr. Mohieldin** (Senior Vice-President for the 2030 Development Agenda, United Nations Relations, and Partnerships at the World Bank Group) said that the international community must also examine the issues from a country perspective. In the face of significant globalization trends and trade liberalization, some States were losing under protectionism policies. The international community must therefore ask country-specific questions to determine whether there were well-coordinated national policies, effective institutions and adequate investments in human capital. Those questions were fundamental, whether the solution was manufacturing or digitalization. The problems at the national level could not simply be attributed to what was happening on a global scale.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

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High-level segment

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President: Mr. Schulz (Vice-President) ..... (Germany)

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Agenda item 5: High-level segment (*continued*)

(a) Ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (*continued*)

General debate (*continued*)

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In the absence of Mr Shava (Zimbabwe), Mr Schulz (Germany), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 5: High-level segment (*continued*) (E/2017/33, E/2017/64, E/2017/66, E/2017/69 and E/2017/72)

(a) Ministerial meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (*continued*) (A/71/976-E/2017/79)

General debate (*continued*)

1. **The President** invited the ministerial meeting to resume its general debate on the theme "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world".

2. **Mr. Miranda** (El Salvador), Vice-Minister for Development Cooperation, speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that the States of CELAC remained committed to fully implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The first Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development and the resulting intergovernmentally agreed recommendations and conclusions were welcome. The Forum had been established to provide a regional mechanism for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. Eleven CELAC States would present their voluntary national reviews at the current high-level political forum on sustainable development and three CELAC countries had presented their reviews at the 2016 high-level political forum, demonstrating the commitment and leadership of the region at the early stages of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

3. Despite the efforts of all countries in the region, official development assistance (ODA) was still needed to reduce inequality and structural gaps, and generate and strengthen capacity; developed countries were therefore called on to fulfil their commitment to allocate 0.7 per cent of their gross national income to ODA. The United Nations system, international financial institutions, regional organizations and other stakeholders, in their strategies and policies, must address the diverse development needs of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, countries in conflict and post-conflict situations and middle-income countries. It was necessary for Governments to agree on comprehensive criteria for the allocation of ODA that went beyond the criterion of per capita income. The CELAC countries, which recognized the importance of international development cooperation and South-South cooperation for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, were also committed to joining efforts to promote education, innovation, human resource development and the transfer of infrastructure, technology and knowledge, including on concessional and preferential terms, to contribute to closing the existing social and economic gaps within and between countries.

4. The CELAC countries reaffirmed their commitment to promoting gender equity and equality, and the advancement of women, as necessary conditions to achieve full exercise and enjoyment of fundamental freedoms and human rights. It was important to respect each country's policy space and leadership with regard to poverty eradication and sustainable development policies. The CELAC countries rejected the unilateral imposition of economic, financial or commercial measures that were incompatible with international law and the Charter of the United Nations and that hindered development finance and prevented the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries.

5. Sound public policies at the global, regional and national levels had a central role to play in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and should be developed in consultation with the private sector, civil society, academia, social movements and the whole of society. The United Nations should continue to provide support through its programmes, funds and specialized agencies.

6. **Mr. Tiare** (Burkina Faso), Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations, said that his Government's new development plan, the National Plan for Economic and Social Development 2016-2020, incorporated 83 of the 169 targets under the Sustainable Development Goals, which would strengthen synergies for economic transformation, the reduction of inequalities, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

7. Under the Plan, the Government had put in place a social protection and gender policy, a sustainable development policy, supported by a new law, and a plan of action for the accelerated reduction of poverty, hunger and food insecurity. Specific actions under the new policies would include measures to improve water management in agriculture, promote entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector and increase the resilience of that sector in the face of climate change. In addition, as part of the structural transformation of the primary

sector, the Government planned to accelerate the establishment of competitive centres of agricultural growth, and to establish mini agropastoral centres in areas where mining projects were taking place. Actions under the Plan to promote sustainable industrialization and the building of resilient infrastructure would focus on the development of small and medium-sized agricultural businesses, the promotion of artisanal production and the revitalization of weak industries.

8. If economic growth occurred at the expected rate of 7.7 per cent between 2016 and 2020, the Plan would also facilitate the creation of approximately 50,000 new jobs each year, which was expected to reduce the level of poverty from 40.1 per cent in 2014 to 35 per cent in 2020. In addition, the Government was currently implementing a three-year emergency plan to increase the autonomy of young persons and women, which would directly generate approximately 90,000 jobs, and indirectly generate another 100,000.

9. In order to implement its policies for reducing poverty and generating shared prosperity, his Government had undertaken major reforms designed to mobilize domestic resources. The reforms would increase the capacity of the State to finance its domestic policies to 63 per cent, meaning that 37 per cent of funding must be found elsewhere. In view of the poverty reduction and development benefits derived from the 2030 Agenda, his Government considered that its efforts deserved to be bolstered by international support. Accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals was a challenge that required all stakeholders to fulfil their commitments, particularly those related to ODA and technology transfer, improved transparency in the extractive sector and the development of South-South cooperation.

10. **Ms. Rubiales de Chamorro** (Nicaragua), Permanent Representative of Nicaragua to the United Nations, said that the most pressing challenge in relation to the 2030 Agenda was finding the means for its implementation. The high-level political forum was an appropriate platform for reaffirming her Government's commitment to ODA, technology transfer, capacity-building and financing, which were all essential for accomplishing the Sustainable Development Goals. Developed countries must fulfil their development-related commitments and the lack of political will to mobilize the necessary means for implementation was regrettable; it was necessary to take responsibility for future generations. The existing model of production, consumption and financing was in crisis.

11. Over the past decade, Nicaragua had transformed: it had progressed towards a social model underpinned by unity, dialogue and consensus among the private sector, workers and the Government, a model intended to support economic development, generate new employment opportunities and reduce poverty. Its progress was reflected by World Bank statistics showing that poverty had decreased, and that gross domestic product (GDP) had increased by 5 per cent over the last five years.

12. A genuine and effective global partnership for development was needed, one which would build on the progress already made and lessons learned, and would ensure that the commitments to sustainable development and financing made at the many international conferences were met. If the Goals were to be achieved, all unilateral coercive measures that violated international law and hindered development must be repealed. It was urgently necessary to promote human development, with social justice, peace and harmony, and respect for the territorial rights and self-determination of peoples, in order to ensure the survival of the human race and the rights of Mother Earth.

13. **Mr. Ievi** (Vanuatu), Permanent Representative of Vanuatu to the United Nations, said that in January 2017 his Government had adopted the National Sustainable Development Plan, which centred on people and poverty eradication and would help the country move towards stability, sustainability and prosperity. The Government's political will was firm, but Vanuatu would not be able to realize the ambitious 2030 Agenda alone.

14. In the World Risk Report 2016, published by the Institute for Environment and Human Security of the United Nations University, Vanuatu was identified as the country most at risk of being impacted by natural disasters, which were largely due to climate change. Vanuatu was affected by systematic weather patterns that were increasing in intensity, causing droughts and floods, as well as rising sea levels, ocean acidification and frequent earthquakes. Its limited capital and human and technological capacities further hindered sustainable development.

15. In view of the numerous challenges that threatened to render sustainable development efforts useless, it was heartening that the importance of addressing the diverse needs of countries in special situations, including Vanuatu, was recognized in multiple international agreements. However, his Government recognized that responsibility for implementing the 2030 Agenda lay with it and with the

people of Vanuatu, and that a paradigmatic shift was needed to adapt the national development system to meet the multisectoral demands of that Agenda. The national statistical system must also be strengthened to provide the accurate disaggregated data necessary for monitoring and informed policy-making.

16. United Nations efforts to make its development system fit for purpose were welcome. His Government also welcomed the draft ministerial declaration of the 2017 high-level political forum. Everyone was responsible for eradicating poverty and ensuring that no one was left behind. In that connection, his Government valued its partnerships with development partners, the private sector, academia and civil society, and hoped to forge additional, enduring and genuine partnerships in the future.

17. **Mr. Al Harthy** (Oman), Permanent Representative of Oman to the United Nations, said that his Government's philosophy was to seek moderation and balance, including a balance between modernity and originality, and between the sustainability of economic resources and the requirements of human beings and the environment. His Government's objective was to provide a dignified life. Therefore, Oman had free education, free medical services and a comprehensive social security system. His Government sought to harmonize its national economic development policy with the 2030 Agenda and had established a special ministerial committee for that purpose.

18. In order to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2, on ending hunger and achieving food security, his Government had established several companies to invest in various agricultural sectors, which would ensure that Oman had enough food to be self-sufficient and also export food. It had also established a national committee for food reserves. With regard to Goal 3, on good health, the Government had provided free medical care for all citizens; that was made possible by its construction of State hospitals in all parts of the country. With regard to Goal 5, on gender equality, the Government was paying special attention to women, which had allowed them to make progress in all areas, and women had participated in the drafting of national development plans on an equal basis with men. In relation to Goal 9, on industry, innovation and infrastructure, Oman was seeking to reduce its reliance on oil by diversifying its economy. Specifically, it was investing more than $50 million in infrastructure. With regard to Goal 14, on conserving and sustainably using the oceans, his Government had a strategic plan to develop the fisheries sector for the period 2015-2020.

19. His Government remained committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda and cooperating with all other stakeholders so that no one would be left behind.

20. **Mr. Cooper** (New Zealand), Principal Adviser, Multilateral and Legal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, said that to address Sustainable Development Goal 1, on ending poverty, his Government had prioritized employment and opportunity through its maintenance of a strong and dynamic economy. In order to share the benefits of growth, in 2017 the Government had established a $2 billion tax package designed to help low- and middle-income families. Other initiatives were in place to reduce long-term welfare dependency, ensure a healthy start to life, support vulnerable children and reduce crime. Through its national aid programme, the Government worked to reduce poverty abroad, with a focus on the economically and environmentally vulnerable small island States of the Pacific. For instance, New Zealand was helping Tonga to upgrade its village electricity network as part of a larger effort to increase renewable energy generation in the Pacific.

21. His country's agricultural base meant that it had a particular contribution to make towards Goal 2. New Zealand had robust processes to oversee all stages of food production, including growth, processing, transporting and exporting. It was committed to sharing its knowledge and expertise with developing countries.

22. With regard to Goal 3, his Government had updated its health strategy in 2016; it was now closely aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and was designed to ensure that all citizens lived well, stayed well and got well. Under the strategy, his Government had increased immunization coverage for eight-month-olds to 93 per cent and had implemented a comprehensive plan to tackle childhood obesity. New Zealand was also working with partners on initiatives to screen for and treat non-communicable diseases, particularly diabetes and heart disease, which were becoming ever more prevalent in the Pacific.

23. New Zealand was committed to the principles underpinning Goal 5, and had had success increasing the proportion of women on state-sector boards — currently at 45 per cent. More than 11 per cent of women aged 15 and over were in tertiary education, as compared to 8.3 per cent of men aged 15 and over. His Government also sought to achieve better gender outcomes in its international cooperation; for instance, it was planning to increase labour mobility opportunities for Pacific women.

24. In connection with Goal 9, New Zealand was challenged by natural disasters. Destructive earthquakes in recent years had made it essential for the Government to prioritize resilient and safe infrastructure and take an innovative approach to supporting affected communities. New Zealand carried the lessons it had learned over into its development cooperation, by investing in the design and construction of resilient infrastructure.

25. Goal 14 was of profound importance to New Zealand and the Pacific region as a whole. Sustainable management was applied for conservation purposes and to increase the value of his country's domestic fishery. New Zealand also supported sustainable management through its international cooperation: it was currently allocating additional resources to improve fishery management in the Pacific, both to improve food security and to provide economic benefits. His Government was determined not to let the sustainable use of marine resources be undermined by illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing.

26. In all its endeavours, New Zealand drew on others' experience, shared its own learning and collaborated with a wide array of partners. His Government looked forward to deepening such collaboration.

27. **Ms. Bird** (Australia), Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, said that Australia would be presenting its voluntary national review at the 2018 high-level political forum. In its review, her Government would outline a range of domestic initiatives it was implementing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including the Smart Cities Plan, a plan for supporting productive, accessible and liveable cities; the Women's Safety Package, a series of measures to provide a safety net for women and children at high risk of experiencing violence; and the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which would provide support for persons with disabilities, their families and carers. Australia would also discuss its domestic and international leadership on issues related to the oceans, including how it was implementing the commitments that it had made at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Australia would use its review to assess the correlation between its aid policy and the 2030 Agenda, including with regard to economic growth, private sector engagement, trade, gender equality, governance and innovation.

28. Work to build on progress towards the 2030 Agenda and identify areas where more was needed would be carried out by all levels of government in collaboration with all stakeholders, including civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The Government would also seek to build stronger partnerships to deliver on the Goals, and would focus on the interlinkages between them. Since the 2030 Agenda could not be achieved without delivering for all of society, including women and girls, the Government would consider its voluntary national review through a strong gender lens. The first step was to strengthen data on gender to facilitate the adoption of gender-based policies and programmes. Acknowledging challenges was an important part of progress, and her Government would be considering the targets that it found challenging throughout the review process. Successful achievement of the 2030 Agenda would depend on collective and inclusive action at the global, regional and national levels.

29. **Ms. Vives Balmaña** (Andorra), Permanent Representative of Andorra to the United Nations, said that inequality and uneven distribution of wealth remained among the principal obstacles to implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, a few months previously, her Government had initiated a participatory process to draft a white paper on equality, a process that had benefited from the support of all sectors. Among other outcomes, the drafting exercise had led to a commitment to accomplish Goal 5, one of the most cross-cutting of the Goals. Specifically, Andorra had committed to systematically reviewing its public policies through a gender lens, for which purpose the Government would establish a new Equality Observatory. The Government would also put in place a programme to ensure the social inclusion of newly arrived immigrants.

30. Human rights must be at the centre of public policy if poverty and hunger were to be eradicated. In that connection, ensuring the right to work was a priority. In compliance with the Global Jobs Pact, her Government had adopted policies to increase the hiring of unemployed persons and to generate new employment opportunities. In addition, starting in 2016 the Government had been implementing a comprehensive professional integration plan in order to include in the labour market persons with disabilities and other groups subject to discrimination.

31. As concerned Goal 3, the national health-care system of Andorra was world-renowned. Under the system, the Government provided tailored social support services to respond to the population's specific needs, notably those of young persons, including

through the identification of situations where there were health risks associated with poverty. Actions to reduce carbon emissions, in line with the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, included the promotion of electric vehicles. The national Climate Observatory worked in coordination with other observatories, and the Government carefully followed environmental monitoring activities, particularly the monitoring of river water.

32. A high-quality education was essential to make global transformation a reality. The shared objective, embodied in the 2030 Agenda, should be to create peaceful and inclusive societies, based on good governance, respect for human rights, non-discrimination and tolerance. To achieve that it was necessary to keep working in a coordinated manner, in partnership with civil society, the private sector and academia.

33. **Mr. Umarov** (Kazakhstan), Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations, said that his Government had streamlined its national action plans and had aligned its national development strategy with the 2030 Agenda Goals and targets.

34. Kazakhstan would present its voluntary national review at the 2018 high-level political forum. The Government was proactively implementing a crisis-prevention strategy, comprising several innovative initiatives, such as the country's second five-year plan for innovative industrial development and a State infrastructure development programme. The economic revival of the Silk Road connecting Asia Pacific and Europe would reduce transport times and costs of goods, and therefore was of great importance for the countries of Eurasia.

35. All Member States were invited to participate in the international exhibition, Astana Expo-2017, which had future energy as its main theme. The primary purpose of the event was to demonstrate how to use the best energy technology to achieve equal and fair access to energy sources, with an emphasis on inclusiveness, social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication. The Expo also had a focus on the special needs of landlocked developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States, and would give rise to innovative new approaches and partnerships.

36. Development should be ethical and no one should be left behind. Close collaboration between the Council and the high-level political forum would provide system-wide policy guidance and coordination in that regard.

37. Kazakhstan was well positioned to implement all the Sustainable Development Goals. It had introduced the Green Bridge Partnership Programme as a way to help countries transition to green economies by fostering partnerships between businesses and institutions. The Regional Hub of Civil Service, in Astana, was intended to support excellence in civil service at the regional and global levels, in order to promote good governance for sustainable development. So far, 32 countries had benefited from the Hub, and the number was expanding. The Hub supported the building of institutions that were open, dynamic, flexible, transparent, streamlined and decentralized, with an emphasis on local decision-making.

38. Having transitioned from a beneficiary of aid to a donor country, Kazakhstan had established an initial development assistance programme, known as KazAID. His Government was committed to the multilateral action that would bring about a truly sustainable, just and equitable future.

39. **Mr. Vukašinović** (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations, said that despite extraordinary progress in reducing poverty worldwide over the last three decades, the proportion of people living in extreme poverty remained unacceptable. Even more alarming was the fact that children were more than twice as likely as adults to live in extreme poverty. Poverty must not be assessed on the basis of per capita income alone; a better understanding was needed of its complex and varied causes. A broad set of interlinked policies, simultaneously implemented in a sustainable and comprehensive manner, was required.

40. Investment in education, skills and health was vital if the cycle of poverty was to be broken. In addition, there was a strong link between investment in new technologies, production capacity and modern infrastructure, and countries' capability to create an environment conducive to sustainable economic growth. Activities oriented towards economic growth must take place against a backdrop of rule of law, accountable institutions and respect for human rights. Young persons, women and other vulnerable groups must be included in poverty eradication efforts for those to result in rapid and sustained poverty reduction.

41. Most middle-income countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, were still facing significant challenges in reducing poverty. It was important that their development policies included means of sustaining the progress already made on poverty reduction. Good governance and responsive democratic institutions were critical in that regard.

42. International public finance played a crucial role in supporting developing countries' public resource mobilization. The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development must be strengthened in order to serve as a genuine global platform for exchange of best practices in the areas of finance, trade, technology and capacity-building. A world free of extreme poverty was possible but required collaboration, underpinned by a determination to promote equal opportunities and prosperity for all. Such collaboration must entail sharing lessons learned regarding the establishment of mechanisms for empowering the poorest.

43. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia), Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations, said that the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda — Ensuring a Better Future for All" was welcome, and called for collaboration at the bilateral, regional and international levels on cross-cutting inclusive approaches to create long-term prosperity for all.

44. In spite of his country's challenges, which included its vast size, small population coupled with extreme inequality, particularly amongst young people, and regular droughts and floods, Namibia had succeeded in reducing poverty by 18 per cent since its independence in 1990. Launched in May 2017, the fifth National Development Plan provided for the modernization of productive systems, increased investment in education, health and housing for youth and women and girls, and the integration of disadvantaged persons into the economy. The Government had also adopted the Harambee Prosperity Plan, and had established a results-based monitoring and evaluation system. National poverty eradication efforts were enhanced by social protection systems, through which the Government provided regional food banks, health services, and education and skill development, as well as enhanced disaster-risk management.

45. Climate change continued to disproportionately impact countries such as Namibia, threatening their development gains. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 were important frameworks for multilateral cooperative action to address the risks of disasters caused by climate change. His Government called for practical support in the areas of science and innovation, industrialization, infrastructure planning and development, capacity-building for domestic resource mobilization, data production and analysis, access to concessional external financing and access to climate financing. With such support, his Government hoped to be able to fully implement the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement at the national level.

46. **Mr. Rattray** (Jamaica), Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations, said that localizing the Sustainable Development Goals was a priority for his Government, which had undertaken a consultative process to align the 2030 Agenda with the national long-term development plan, Vision 2030 Jamaica. A Rapid Integrated Assessment carried out by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had shown that there was 91 per cent alignment of national goals and outcomes with the 2030 Agenda.

47. In order to coordinate action on the Goals, the Government had established a Core Group for the Sustainable Development Goals, comprised of representatives of the Planning Institute of Jamaica, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, and the Statistical Institute of Jamaica. In addition, the Cabinet had recently approved the establishment of a multi-stakeholder national oversight committee comprising representatives of the Government, the private sector and civil society organizations. The committee's functions would include the delivery of policy advice to the Government on monitoring implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and other platforms of action; oversight of the alignment of the Sustainable Development Goals with policies and plans through strategic partnerships; and monitoring and reviewing the achievement of the Goals against agreed targets and indicators.

48. Jamaica had played a leading role in regional efforts to mainstream the Goals into national development policies and programmes. In February 2017 it had hosted a Caribbean symposium on that issue, convened by the subregional headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. In June 2017 Jamaica had hosted Caribbean Action 2030: Regional Conference on the Sustainable Development Goals, which had resulted in the endorsement of a draft partnership framework.

49. The Statistical Institute of Jamaica had played a leading role at the global level by representing Jamaica and the Caribbean subregion in the Inter-agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. Jamaica was also a member of the Expert Group on National Quality Assurance Frameworks of the United Nations Statistical Commission.

50. His Government had undertaken several initiatives aimed at improving the standard of living and reducing extreme poverty, including the

formulation of a national policy on poverty and a national programme on poverty reduction. Growth initiatives reflecting the integrated nature of sustainable development had also been developed to, inter alia: maintain macroeconomic stability and reduce the national debt; enhance citizen security and public safety; increase access to finance; improve the business environment through bureaucratic reform; and stimulate greater asset utilization.

51. **Mr. Tupouniua** (Tonga), Permanent Representative of Tonga to the United Nations, said that poverty eradication, promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base were essential requirements for sustainable development. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Tonga had collaborated with UNDP to align the Sustainable Development Goals with its national development plan for 2012-2025. The process had involved a nationwide consultation to review and endorse the Goal indicators relevant to Tonga and then incorporate those into a database for tracking outcomes, plans and budget allocation.

52. Although it was the first time the planning, monitoring and review of development progress was being conducted in a single system in Tonga, large gaps remained with regard to the availability and quality of data. Tonga thus noted the need to strengthen statistical capacity, especially through national statistical systems in developing countries, as mentioned in the 2017 Sustainable Development Goals Report.

53. It was important to recognize the indivisible nature of the Sustainable Development Goals to achieve inclusive sustainable development. In the context of a small island developing State, it was particularly necessary to strengthen efforts to address the management of non-communicable diseases and the impact of climate change on the oceans.

54. While Tonga was moving towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, it could not do so in isolation. Cohesive and collaborative partnerships to build local and national capacity, provide sustainable and adequate financial support, and strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms would be crucial for the effective eradication of poverty and the promotion of prosperity in a changing world.

55. **Ms. Beckles** (Trinidad and Tobago), Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations, said that her Government had elaborated a strong national development strategy called Vision 2030 through a collaborative process with ministries, national agencies and departments. Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, comprehensive in scope and cross-cutting in nature, the ambitious national plan recognized the importance of all citizens and placed special emphasis on eliminating poverty, inequality, discrimination and poor health. A healthy environment, including oceans, was also at the heart of all national development efforts.

56. Trinidad and Tobago strove to create a society where basic needs were met and all persons were given the opportunity to meaningfully contribute to society. In that regard, her Government was grateful for the assistance of the United Nations country team during preparations for its Vision 2030.

57. The draft report produced by UNDP on the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support Mission sent to Trinidad and Tobago in 2016 was currently being considered by her Government and would inform appropriate strategies for the monitoring and evaluation of Sustainable Development Goal implementation at the national level.

58. Her delegation welcomed the draft ministerial declaration despite recognizing its shortcomings.

59. **Ms. Kadare** (Albania), Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations, said that her country had committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in 2014, when it had partnered with UNDP to carry out a pilot project to develop good governance targets, indicators and performance measures within the framework of the Goals. Incorporating those indicators into its national strategy for development and integration, Albania had also shared with other countries its experience of achieving good governance, accountability, transparency, participation and predictability. Her Government had always encouraged the use of the highest standard of information and communications technologies in governance.

60. Her country's economic growth, projected to be 3.7 per cent in 2017 by the International Monetary Fund, was the first tangible result of the national strategy's implementation. Although the employment rate had increased from 50 to 56 per cent in the previous three years, the main challenge remained fighting poverty and social exclusion in an integrated manner, in order to minimize the economic and social differences between urban and rural areas.

61. Achieving gender equality and the socioeconomic empowerment of women and girls was also a priority for her Government. Recent parliamentary results had increased the percentage of women in office to 28 per

cent. There were a number of different sectors where women were paid more than men. Statistics also showed that Albanian women owned 26.8 per cent of private enterprises in the country. The participation of women and girls in all areas was crucial to sustainable socioeconomic development but also to ensuring peace and stability worldwide. As a strong supporter of Goal 5, Albania had expressed its concern about the weakening of language in the draft ministerial declaration, which had omitted a number of important targets. While her country had joined consensus on the declaration, it remained convinced that the achievement of the Goals was inseparably linked to the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment, as the world could not be transformed if half of humanity was left behind.

62. Albania had established a dedicated interministerial committee that would regularly convene the private sector, civil society and international partners to oversee monitoring and identification of specific gaps with regard to implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In 2018, the country would present its voluntary national review.

63. **Mr. Mnatsakanyan** (Armenia), Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations, said that implementation of the 2030 Agenda was first taking place at the national level. Armenia was establishing institutional frameworks to ensure that its national priorities were compatible with the Sustainable Development Goals, with a view to enhancing effective international cooperation for development with its partners. The country had likewise launched a number of government programmes and public-private partnerships to implement development reforms. Armenia would present its voluntary national review in 2018.

64. Leveraging new and existing partnerships for innovation must be an important component of the United Nations development system, as strong partnerships with the private sector, international financial institutions, academia and civil society would be critical to mobilizing investments for projects in support of the Goals. Information and communications technologies were a fundamental driver of change and could help to create more inclusive and participatory systems.

65. Impact investment could help to leverage funding for the Sustainable Development Goals while also generating a financial return. Armenia had hosted the first Impact Investment for Development Summit in 2017 in partnership with UNDP and the Social Impact Initiative of the European Institute of Business Administration. The Summit had brought together social entrepreneurs, impact investors, government representatives and academia for interactive thematic discussions exploring the potential of leveraging social enterprise and impact business to achieve the Goals. Armenia had shared the Summit outcomes during a side event of the high-level political forum and encouraged further discussions on the role of technology and innovation in scaling up development solutions.

66. Goal 16 had a critical role to play in ensuring a peaceful and sustainable future. In that regard, institutional strength for good governance was crucial for expanding opportunities for the population and continued to be an overarching priority for Armenia and its reform agenda.

67. **Mr. Fialho Rocha** (Cabo Verde), Permanent Representative of Cabo Verde to the United Nations, said that his country had been implementing strategies for growth and poverty reduction, which had led to its graduation from least developed status and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The development efforts of his Government were centred on strengthening democracy, ensuring economic growth and investing in human capital. A national strategic plan for sustainable development was being finalized that would align national priorities with the 2030 Agenda and match needs with funding access.

68. Although Cabo Verde was a graduated small island developing State, it still faced challenges, including limited access to funding, which had a negative impact on further progress towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. The economic vulnerability index had not been considered when assessing the country's graduation, which had been negatively affected in recent years by the international financial crisis, the phasing out of ODA partners and increasingly limited access to concessional financing. Cabo Verde remained a small island developing State structurally and geographically, which entailed a certain level of vulnerability. If, as it was often argued, the strict availability of adequate financing was not the problem, then strategies must be devised to access both classic and innovative sources of financing.

69. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda must avoid a one-size-fits-all approach and recognize that certain mechanisms were more relevant to small island developing States than others, including those intended to bolster private investment in small islands, encourage small project financing programmes by multilateral banks, or grant access to ODA and multilateral debt management.

70. The United Nations should play a role in determining how the international community addressed the special needs of transitioning States like Cabo Verde and how it accounted for different categories of middle-income countries. His delegation suggested the creation of a desk secretariat that would be a one-stop-shop to address all issues pertinent to small island developing States.

71. **Mr. Mero** (United Republic of Tanzania), Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to the United Nations, said that since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, Tanzania had made significant progress translating them into national time-bound targets implemented through key national policy frameworks. The Goals had been mainstreamed into a variety of medium-term plans and frameworks. The follow-up and review of the Goals was being conducted by the Ministry of Finance and Planning in collaboration with other stakeholders both within and outside of the Government, including research institutions. A road map for the Goals had been developed with the aim of ensuring the availability of high-quality data and building the requisite capacity to collect, analyse and utilize data for decision-making and other relevant purposes. His Government was also developing a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track implementation of its various national plans and poverty trends, as well as progress towards achieving the Goals.

72. Over the previous decade, GDP had grown annually by 7 per cent, falling short of the annual rate of approximately 10 per cent required to eradicate absolute poverty. Tanzania was thus on a vigorous drive to speed up its development processes so as to attain the desired socioeconomic transformation and achieve its national objectives.

73. While no one Goal was more important than any other, some acted as catalysts for the achievement of the rest. For example, the achievement of all the Goals would be expedited by investing in infrastructure, industrialization and innovation as outlined in Goal 9.

74. In response to the continuous call from the international community for developing countries to increase domestic resource mobilization, Tanzania had fought against corruption, reviewed mining laws and reduced unnecessary government expenditures. The increased revenue generated by those measures had been directed into building new railway systems, revamping the national carrier, providing free education and building tarmac roads to connect the county from north to south and east to west.

75. However, such national efforts were necessary but not sufficient for the successful realization of the Goals, especially the overarching objective of eradicating poverty by 2030. Developed countries must complement the efforts of developing countries in the fight against corruption, which was both a national and international challenge. Developed countries must also help to level the playing field with regard to international trade, prevent capital flight from developing countries and adhere to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. In that regard, the importance of the full implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda could not be overemphasized. At the national level, his Government would continue to mainstream the Goals into its local government plans, to improve its national statistical system to generate the necessary data for reporting on the Goals and to enhance resource mobilization.

76. **Mr. Alotaibi** (Kuwait), Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations, said that the 2030 Agenda was in line with the recently launched Kuwait national development plan, which had placed poverty eradication and meeting the needs of 1.3 billion people around the world as a prerequisite for sustainable peace and development. His Government had long adopted policies to support all countries with sustainable development, deploying many humanitarian efforts in particular. Kuwait had spared no effort to provide sustainable development assistance to developing countries by means of concessional loans and grants, including through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Sustainable Development.

77. The Government was mobilizing all efforts to implement the seven pillars of its national development plan to transform Kuwait into a regional hub by 2035. All the Sustainable Development Goals were also being implemented at the local level and the relevant national institutions were issuing reports on development performance through a national observatory on sustainable development.

78. Given the current political, climate and environmental challenges affecting the world, it was important for the United Nations to bring countries together to build a better future.

79. **Mr. Al-Mouallimi** (Saudi Arabia), Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, said that his country attached great importance to human development and prosperity and was committed to achieving sustainable development at the national level by collaborating with all partners both regionally and internationally. The national development programme of Saudi Arabia, Vision 2030, was based

on the three pillars of a vibrant society, a prosperous economy and an ambitious nation. Vision 2030, in alignment with the 2030 Agenda, sought to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of social services; to increase the participation of women in the labour market; to facilitate access to health-care services; to ensure protection against health hazards; to enhance development and food security; to improve local, regional and international trade and transport networks; to protect the environment against pollution; and to further develop the digital economy.

80. Saudi Arabia had launched a number of programmes and initiatives to provide housing to all vulnerable groups, including widows and orphans, to improve transport, and to focus on a number of public health concerns such as obesity, disease and smoking. His Government had also launched programmes to empower women and remove obstacles to their participation in the labour market, including by providing affordable transportation and childcare. National initiatives were monitored using a number of national indicators in line with the Sustainable Development Goal indicators.

81. Saudi Arabia would present its voluntary review during the 2018 high-level political forum.

82. **Ms. Pires** (Timor-Leste), Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations, said that at the national level and through wide consultations with ministries, civil society and the private sector, her Government had undertaken a mapping of the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure their full alignment with national planning and budgeting processes. The country's road map for achieving the Goals predominantly featured cross-cutting Goals 5, 16 and 17, which were the backbone of its sustainable development.

83. To diversify its economy, Timor-Leste had developed a tourism policy that benefited economically from its seas while taking action on preservation. Her country had made four voluntary commitments at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 in June 2017. She commended the Governments of Fiji and Sweden, as well as the President of the General Assembly, for the momentum they had helped to create regarding that vital issue.

84. Timor-Leste was fully committed to gender equality and had therefore mainstreamed gender into its planning and programming cycles; her Government was also undertaking gender budget analysis and had adopted a national action plan to combat gender-based violence. For gender against women to be eradicated, national actions would need to be matched with global, collective efforts to end sexual violence, exploitation and abuse, especially by those who served in the name of the United Nations.

85. Timor-Leste had demonstrated that a country anywhere along the fragility spectrum could start developing a concrete pathway to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level. Having benefited greatly from international solidarity and the multilateral system, Timor-Leste sought to give back by sharing its experience through fragile-to-fragile cooperation as a member of the Group of Seven Plus, which now had 20 member States. Her country had also made financial contributions to the Group's secretariat and foundation whenever possible.

86. Timor-Leste supported the proposal of the Secretary-General for a global financing pact to ensure adequate funding for the achievement of the Goals. It was vital for States emerging from conflict or experiencing conflict and fragility to build on previously agreed commitments.

87. **Mr. Bouah-Kamon** (Côte d'Ivoire), Permanent Representative of Côte d'Ivoire to the United Nations, said that, since 2012, his country had been experiencing significant economic growth, which had allowed it to respect its national and international commitments. However, his country's ambition to become an emerging economy by 2020 was dependent on being able to overcome a number of challenges, including the equitable sharing of wealth, with a view to achieving social equality and environmental sustainability. The new Constitution, adopted in 2016, had taken into account the Sustainable Development Goals. A new national development plan had also made several new commitments in such areas as education, the needs of vulnerable persons, environmental protection, poverty eradication in rural areas and gender equality. The Government's development efforts were aligned with other national and regional agendas such as the Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

88. As a result, Côte d'Ivoire had increased the average growth rate of its GDP to 9.4 per cent. It had moreover witnessed a growth of 6 per cent in the value of the agricultural sector, a 10 per cent decrease in poverty and increased food security in various agricultural subsectors.

89. The challenges posed by the demographic dividend had been incorporated into national policies on demographics and development, with a significant emphasis placed on health, education, employment and the environment. His Government had succeeded in

lowering the rate of maternal and neonatal mortality. A civil society initiative in support of the Sustainable Development Goals had been launched in 2015; the platform worked to mobilize citizens to promote and realize the Goals in accordance with target 17 of Goal 17.

90. Similarly, his Government had adopted an institutional and legal framework to deal with issues of public health, the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development; to that end, it had also signed and ratified the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, as a State Party to the Convention for Cooperation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central African Region, Côte d'Ivoire had implemented a national emergency response system to combat pollution caused by oil spills and other hazardous substances at sea, in lagoons and along coastlines.

91. His Government was working to ensure national ownership of the Goals at all levels, as well as their integration into sectoral and local public policies and the mobilization of domestic resources to support inclusive development programmes. His delegation was grateful to the United Nations system and all its development partners for their support and urged them to continue providing assistance to achieve the Goals. Côte d'Ivoire reiterated its support for the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The country would present its voluntary national review in 2018.

92. **Ms. Miguel** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Deputy Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, said that her country continued to work towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda as a small island developing State with vulnerabilities to exogenous shocks. Prior to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, her country had already elaborated an economic development plan that had outlined five goals which had broadly encompassed all 17 Sustainable Development Goals; those objectives had subsequently been aligned with the targets of the new Agenda.

93. Although Saint Vincent and the Grenadines supported the Zero Hunger Challenge launched as part of the Goals, the country had set the more ambitious objective of eliminating hunger by 2020. To that end, her country had established a parliamentary mechanism and a trust fund in support of eradicating hunger. The Zero Hunger Trust Fund was a public-private partnership that provided resources and solicited contributions from public enterprises, the private sector, multilateral organizations and other States. Recognizing the cyclical link between poverty, hunger and education, one of the Fund's first initiatives had been a programme benefiting 190 students from rural areas. In addition, a massive education and employment programme, launched in 2016, aimed to educate over 3,000 indigent, poor and vulnerable persons with a view to enhancing their employability so that they could live in dignity.

94. Poverty would not be eradicated with any quick fixes. The high-level political forum therefore provided Member States with a welcome opportunity to learn from others at various stages of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

95. **Mr. Moustapha** (Chad), Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations, said that, in 2015, his Government had conducted a comprehensive study in consultation with all segments of the population that had led to the elaboration of the national Vision 2030: The Chad We Want. Chad was one of the least developed countries, as well as a landlocked developing country in a fragile situation. In order to address the lack of development and eradicate poverty in Chad, it would be necessary to create sustainable and resilient infrastructure. His Government was therefore building social and sanitary infrastructure, developing new thoroughfares and connecting to other roadways, including the Trans-Sahara Highway project that would link Chad to its neighbours and major bodies of water.

96. As a country that primarily relied on agriculture for subsistence, Chad experienced food precarity caused by its archaic farming and livestock management methods. Its economy was largely composed of small and medium-sized enterprises, many of which operated in the informal sector and thus struggled to access the necessary capital and technical skills. His Government was therefore investing in industrialization, with a view to stimulating growth, creating jobs for women and youth, and building an economy that was based on the domestic transformation of products.

97. Indicators must be developed for the effective implementation of the country's Vision 2030. Chad was also working to strengthen national unity, good governance, the rule of law and inclusive growth. In support of those development efforts, his delegation requested the assistance of the United Nations system, as well as its technical and financial partners and the private sector.

98. **Mr. Marzooq** (Iraq), Deputy Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, said that

the world was facing critical political, security, economic and social challenges and that his Government was making extraordinary efforts to realize all the dimensions of sustainable development and leave no one behind. However, after 2014, a large area of his country had been occupied by the terrorist group Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and there had then been widespread destruction of infrastructure and private property in addition to unprecedented displacement leading to a range of economic, social and financial problems. The fall in oil prices and the cost of military operations to recover and rehabilitate the areas occupied by the terrorists had consumed over 40 per cent of the State budget, and there had been a corresponding drop in development successes. Poverty levels had increased beyond normal.

99. Regarding security, Iraq had fought fierce battles, most recently the battle of Mosul, but had successfully liberated its territory. Taking into consideration the serious consequences of terrorism, the Government had put in place new development plans for 2018 to 2022, including plans and strategies seeking to provide dignity and stability for children.

100. The international community should help save Iraq by fulfilling its commitments, especially because the war against terrorism was not a war in defence of Iraq alone, it was in defence of humankind as a whole. It had come at a high cost in blood and money in addition to environmental damage.

101. **Ms. Nusseibeh** (United Arab Emirates), Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, said that a national committee on the Sustainable Development Goals had been established in the United Arab Emirates in 2017 with the aim of aligning national development and foreign assistance frameworks with the Goals, and ensuring consistent data coverage and reporting. The committee was made up of representatives of government ministries and the Prime Minister's Office and was chaired by the Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority. The United Arab Emirates planned to present its voluntary national review in 2018 and on that occasion would elaborate further on progress in accomplishing the Goals as well as institutional mechanisms for monitoring and driving those efforts.

102. The high-level political forum should provide an action-oriented platform for Member States, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders in two areas in particular where progress towards all the Sustainable Development Goals could be assessed. Firstly, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls would be key to progress across all the Goals. In her capacity as President of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), she was concerned that a number of targets from Goal 5 had been omitted from the declaration of the high-level political forum at a time when women and girls continued to be subject to discrimination, violence and harmful practices, and were still denied their rights. Gender equality and the empowerment of women were cross-cutting areas and a prerequisite for achieving all the Goals. In that regard, the United Nations had an exceptional opportunity to lead by example by taking extraordinary measures, namely, by creating a dedicated budget line for women's empowerment systems; using strong language in the terms of reference for resident coordinators and all employees to ensure that gender equality was an integral part of their work; providing a minimum package of health and education services; and using mandatory standardized gender markers. Bold action would bring results.

103. Secondly, the 2030 Agenda had emphasized the importance of mobilizing all available resources, but it had since become clear that a dramatic increase in the international community's investment in capacity-building would be needed to mobilize private sector resources. The United Nations would have a leading role in that area.

104. Finally, there could be no genuine sustainable development without peace, security and stability. In that regard, her Government regretted that some States had sought to avoid their obligations by mischaracterizing as illegal the lawful, justified and proportionate diplomatic measures taken to address terrorism.

105. **Ms. Ziade** (Lebanon), Chargé d'Affaires of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations, said that poverty, in its multiple forms, remained the greatest global challenge and its eradication was an indispensable requirement for achieving sustainable development, including in middle-income countries such as Lebanon. In spite of the progress made in recent decades, Lebanon continued to face persistent and emerging challenges across the Sustainable Development Goals.

106. Those challenges had been compounded by the influx of more than 1 million refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic. The impact had been immense in the form of slower economic growth, increasing unemployment and poverty, and the overburdening of infrastructure. Lebanon would require international support beyond the narrow prism of humanitarian

assistance. Longer-term development financing in the form of concessional loans and grants, and flexible investment loans spearheaded by international and regional development banks, would be necessary to deal with a refugee crisis of such magnitude. The financing would be used to upgrade the overburdened infrastructure of Lebanon, with priority being given to sanitation, education, electricity and transportation in order to meet the needs of both refugees and host communities.

107. The council of ministers of Lebanon had decided in June 2017 to establish a national committee to lead and coordinate national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and achieve the Goals. The committee was headed by the Prime Minister and included representatives of relevant ministries and departments, the private sector and civil society. One of its functions would be to integrate the Goals into national sustainable development plans and programmes, raise public awareness, develop a national database of indicators, and prepare the voluntary national review of Lebanon. The head of the national Lebanese council for development and reconstruction and the United Nations resident coordinator had signed an agreement in June 2017 on gaps and advances in the realization of the Goals. The gap analysis would include a review of all national strategies and plans to achieve the Goals, and would also support the preparation of the voluntary national review of Lebanon.

108. **Mr. Choeda** (Bhutan), Chargé d'Affaires of the Permanent Mission of Bhutan to the United Nations, said that his country would present its voluntary national review in 2018. The overarching goal of the national development plans of Bhutan had been to eradicate poverty in all its dimensions on the basis of the development concept of gross national happiness. The number of people trapped in poverty had been halved from 23 per cent in 2007 to 12 per cent in 2012 and efforts were being made to lower that number even further.

109. All policies were subjected to a gross national happiness screening tool which assessed the impact of a particular policy on 22 variables including living standards, material well-being, equity, health and education. Sections of the population were nevertheless at risk of falling back into poverty. A range of policies and economic measures was therefore needed to sustain existing achievements in the area of poverty reduction over the long term.

110. The similarities between the philosophy of gross national happiness and the Goals meant that Bhutan had found it easy to integrate the two. Of the 17 Goals, 14 were aligned with the 16 national key result areas of his country's current eleventh five-year plan, and the twelfth five-year plan would be launched in time for the next parliamentary elections. His country had pledged to remain carbon-neutral and 72 per cent of its territory was forested, as mandated by its Constitution. Implementing Goals 7, 8, 9 and 10 would boost productive capacity and develop resilient and sustainable infrastructure.

111. Bhutan had been found eligible for graduation from the least developed countries category, but graduation was also a cause for concern since it should be confident and sustainable with no risk of backtracking on development gains. The continued support and assistance of development partners would therefore be needed to ensure a smooth transition.

112. **Mr. Ben Sliman** (Tunisia), Deputy Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, said that his country would spare no efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and make them part of its national development policies. His Government had sought to integrate the sustainable development targets into its development plan for 2016 to 2020.

113. Tunisia was proud of its social successes since 1956 and had consistently prioritized education and health care, including reproductive health. As a result, it had many positive indicators. Literacy among children under 6 years of age was 99.4 per cent and population growth was 4.4 per cent. The aim was to reduce the poverty rate to 2.5 per cent by 2020 and to assist marginalized and vulnerable social groups by increasing employment and improving infrastructure. Tunisia had also made strides in the areas of political reform and good governance since the revolution of January 2011. There had been fully free parliamentary and presidential elections and major reforms were being implemented in the areas of human rights, security, judicial independence, public administration, counter-terrorism and efforts to combat corruption and bribery.

114. To enlighten young people about the Sustainable Development Goals, Tunisia was promoting a related video game with technical and financial support from Finland. It was important to enhance international partnerships for development and developed countries should help countries in transition particularly with ODA, and assist them in overcoming economic challenges and social pressures. They should also support international efforts to suppress illicit financial flows and tax evasion, and to retrieve stolen funds. Developing countries needed capacity-building to deal

with climate change and facilitate transfers of technology. Tunisia stood ready to take part in trilateral cooperation on the basis of its successful experiences in Africa and the Arab region. The international community should pool all efforts to that end.

115. **Mr. Tsymbaliuk** (Ukraine), Deputy Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations, said that his country was struggling to ensure stability and security in spite of aggression by the Russian Federation, but was nevertheless determined to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. National consultations had involved representatives of governmental institutions, United Nations agencies, academia, civil society and think tanks. A national report on the Goals had been presented in May 2017. It contained targets and indicators adapted to Ukraine and would be used to mainstream the Goals into national development frameworks. His delegation expressed its gratitude to the United Nations development system for its advice and assistance in that regard.

116. Ukraine had deposited its instrument of ratification of the Paris Agreement in September 2016. In the same year, it had completed the United Nations action plan on Chernobyl to 2016 and the Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Chernobyl-Affected Regions. However, there was a need for continued efforts to keep post-Chernobyl recovery high on the international agenda.

117. Progress had been made in the areas of maternal health, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. With the assistance of international organizations and bilateral donors, Ukraine was committed to combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Member States should also fulfil their commitments to promoting the peaceful and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources, and build innovative new partnerships in the wake of the recent United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

118. United Nations initiatives aimed at halving global hunger would affect all other development goals. There should be intensified cooperation between United Nations agencies and international financial institutions, and the United Nations system should make use of the comparative advantages of its different institutions.

119. With its vast human and material resources, Ukraine would make a significant contribution to global peace and security. Ukrainians had first-hand experience of conflict and its consequences. The strengthening of sustainable peace and security should therefore become a driving force behind collective efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

120. **Ms. Aye** (Myanmar), Deputy Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations, said that her Government had prioritized investment in health care and education as an essential element in fighting poverty. The entire population had access to a basic essential package of health services. Although the national peace process remained a key factor, other issues remained high on her Government's agenda such as rural development, social protection, safety nets for vulnerable people, women's empowerment and enhancement of the role of the private sector.

121. In collaboration with UNDP, Myanmar had produced a report on the readiness of its official statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals. The report examined the availability of data for measuring indicators within the framework of the Goals. A data baseline report would be released later in the year.

122. Most developing countries were vulnerable to climate change and the international community should be united in addressing vulnerabilities and strengthening preparedness. Natural disasters could cause major socioeconomic setbacks and a decline in economic growth, especially in developing countries. The universal implementation of the Paris Agreement would be the most effective way to address that global issue.

123. Capacity-building and technical assistance were opportunities to tackle poverty and sustain development. Her Government was therefore investing in vocational training schools and tertiary education. It was also establishing international partnerships to build trust and mutual understanding in order to address poverty and advance towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

124. Poverty eradication was key to strengthening political, economic and social cohesion. The international community should therefore be united in its efforts to respect and be guided by the ministerial declaration of the high-level political forum.

125. **Mr. Amer** (Israel), Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations, said that it was encouraging to see from the review by the high-level political forum that much progress had already been made on the road to 2030. However, significant obstacles lay ahead. Poverty eradication, the backbone of the 2030 Agenda, would be achieved only if the commitments made in September 2015 were fulfilled.

126. His country had been working on all fronts to translate the 2030 Agenda into reality. The Israeli parliament had recently held a special session to raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals and

motivate lawmakers to take action. Furthermore, a special conference bringing together representatives of the Government, the private sector and civil society had been organized in April 2017 in Israel in order to discuss partnerships for sustainable development. From innovative solutions to cutting-edge technologies, the private sector, academia and civil society in Israel had been steadfast development partners.

127. Of particular importance for Israel were the cross-cutting issues of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. A gender perspective had been included in the State budget and every ministry was required to advance gender equality through access to decision-making roles and special employment programmes.

128. The Agency for International Development Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel had been working for decades to build the capacities of countries around the world, with particular emphasis on sustainable agriculture and food security. Israeli experts had worked with farmers and agricultural experts to improve crop yields, improve water and land management and build new capacities. General Assembly resolution 70/198 on agricultural technologies for sustainable development, which had been sponsored by Israel, had stressed the need for policymakers to empower smallholders and family farmers by giving them the skills and tools they needed to become masters of their own destiny.

129. **Mr. Kalamvrezos** (Greece), Chargé d'Affaires of the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations, said that many of the Sustainable Development Goals and targets related to leaving no one behind, and referred to specific objectives and actions. Leaving no one behind would require above all understanding and addressing the root causes of poverty, inequality and marginalization. Strategies to leave no one behind should include legal regulatory components, multiple institutions intervening at various levels and broader societal changes.

130. The transition to a more sustainable world would require ambitious governmental action rooted in democratic decision-making with the active participation of all stakeholders. Poverty eradication, efforts to address inequalities and leaving no one behind were at the heart of the development cooperation policy of the European Union. The European Union and its member States would implement the 2030 Agenda across all internal and external policies, addressing the interlinkages between the different Goals and the impact of their domestic actions at the global level.

131. On 20 June, the States members of the European Union had adopted decisions on a sustainable European future, thereby reiterating their commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda in full. Furthermore, the new European Consensus on Development provided a new framework for a common approach to development policy to be applied by European Union institutions and member States in their cooperation with developing countries. The Consensus provided fresh momentum for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the development policy of the European Union.

132. Greece was currently considering how best to adapt the Sustainable Development Goals to national priorities and circumstances. Since Greece was going through a difficult financial and economic phase, the general aim was to use the opportunity provided by the Goals to revisit the country's development perspectives from a new long-term, sustainable and more balanced point of view, making existing national plans, thematic strategies and policies more aware of the Goals and increasing their complementarity. Greece would present its voluntary national review at the high-level political forum in 2018.

133. **Mr. Shaweesh** (Observer for the State of Palestine), Counsellor, Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, said that his Government had established a high-level group to implement the 2030 Agenda and had adopted a plan of action for the period 2017 to 2022 in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in coordination with all national and international partners, especially the United Nations programmes that worked in the State of Palestine.

134. Development and peace were indivisible. The 2030 Agenda encouraged societies to move towards peace and justice and to end violence and fear. Peace was a prerequisite for sustainable development and vice versa. The Palestinian people had one of the world's highest education levels and were ready and able to achieve development if they could control their natural resources, transit routes and borders. True development in the State of Palestine was being hampered, however, by the challenge of the occupation by Israel of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, 50 years of negative development and dependence on the Israeli economy, and 50 years of complete control of the Palestinian economy, the means of production, capital and production factors. Those facts, confirmed in the Secretary-General's report and reports by all United Nations bodies and the World Bank Group, were preventing development in the State of Palestine.

135. The high-level group in the State of Palestine was preparing to present its voluntary national review and would draw conclusions on the challenges facing Palestinian development. The Palestinian people were capable of anything as long as they had the opportunity to work and be the creators of their own future.

136. **Mr. Mikayilli** (Azerbaijan), First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, said that the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions was the greatest global challenge and the primary overarching goal of the 2030 Agenda.

137. Strengthened and increased collection, dissemination and use of data would ensure that the social and geographical distribution of poverty was well understood and would inform evidence-based and data-driven poverty eradication efforts.

138. His Government was accelerating its efforts to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals into national policies and strategies in order to foster the socioeconomic development of the country. The National Coordination Council for Sustainable Development had been established by presidential decree and his country was proud to have presented its voluntary national review in 2017. Voluntary national reviews highlighted the importance of support and leadership at the highest level.

139. By 2020, his Government was determined to reduce poverty by, inter alia: creating additional jobs, increasing salaries and pensions, and developing the social protection system; improving the quality of life and food security of the most vulnerable segments of the population through targeted assistance; enhancing the quality of the health-care system through boosted State funding and a transition to mandatory medical insurance; developing new industrial sectors and diversifying the economy; upgrading the quality of drinking water; and advancing gender equality by encouraging the active participation of women in the economy, political life and civil society organizations.

140. **Ms. Sharbaji** (Syrian Arab Republic), Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, said that achieving sustainable development in her country was more of a challenge than ever. Development was clearly the responsibility of the Government, but counter-terrorism was a regional and international issue. Terrorism was being exploited for political ends and was destroying the cultural heritage and infrastructure of the Syrian Arab Republic. It had become a danger that could no longer be contained within the country's borders.

141. Terrorism had social, environmental and economic consequences, but the Government had nevertheless adopted a national programme to overcome the crisis with a view to freeing up socioeconomic capacities. The programme was based on a series of strategies that involved building institutions, modernizing infrastructure and achieving sustainable development using a balanced approach to human, social, cultural and educational development as well as national dialogue. To that end, all ministries were being consulted, and administrative reforms were being introduced to reform the bureaucracy, monitor performance and standards, combat corruption and measure the level of satisfaction among citizens.

142. Achieving prosperity while combating poverty required addressing the economic, social and environmental haemorrhage that the Syrian Arab Republic had endured in recent years. Sustainable development was not possible without peace and security. The crisis must therefore end and the damage done to the Syrian Arab Republic had to be recognized. Sustainable development also required the end of unilateral measures imposed on the Syrian Arab Republic.

143. **Ms. Diallo** (Observer for the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions) said that the work of her association was similar to that of the Economic and Social Council itself. Efforts to eradicate poverty should take into account the diversity of policies on that issue. Priority should be given to poverty-specific policies based on social security and protection systems and policies that could help to reduce poverty through education, health care, employment, housing and, more generally, tax policies. All poverty reduction activities could be divided into two types, namely, actual poverty reduction and the prevention of future risks of poverty. Both a thorough analysis and a reliable prediction of future processes resulting from new technologies and the knowledge economy were needed. The prevention of poverty among children and women was a specific problem for any institution or organization.

144. Widening the debate on poverty eradication and the promotion of prosperity in a changing world involved addressing global governance. Linking governance with poverty meant addressing one phenomenon with a variety of aspects and causes that required coordinated action, reflecting the diversity of actors and institutions at the national and international levels. The approval of criteria for the Council's role in addressing poverty-related inequalities would be a welcome development.

145. **Mr. Chungong** (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union) said that the most recent assembly of his organization had debated how to redress inequalities as a means of increasing the dignity of the people. The resulting declaration adopted had highlighted the structural causes of economic, social and political inequalities and had provided a set of policy recommendations. Reversing the trend of growing inequalities was a prerequisite for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The declaration also recognized that, in a finite world, inequality could not be resolved through exponential economic growth in the hope that a rising sea would lift all boats. Instead, there was a need for a proactive effort giving rise to the redistribution of wealth and power. That could happen only if parliaments and other national and global decision-making centres represented all people in all societies.

146. Each spring session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union was designed to prepare parliamentarians for the high-level political forum by assessing the effectiveness of parliamentary action and sharing experiences that could be replicated everywhere. The 2017 session had highlighted the importance of subjecting all policy proposals made by Governments to the test of the Sustainable Development Goals and checking how each bill fit into the national plan of action. The Inter-Parliamentary Union wished to mobilize parliaments to strengthen accountability for the Goals, a number of parliaments had been involved in the voluntary national review process and more would be encouraged to do the same. During the current high-level political forum, there had been a meeting of parliamentarians present and they had been very active in supporting the achievement of the Goals.

147. **Mr. de Rojas** (Observer for the Sovereign Order of Malta) said that the Sovereign Order of Malta had been committed to the care of the sick and poor for over 900 years and currently operated over 2,000 projects in over 120 countries. The assistance provided by the Order was focused on the most marginalized and vulnerable irrespective of religion, ethnicity or nationality.

148. The Order's work echoed the 2030 Agenda in its efforts to leave no one behind and a large part of those efforts was devoted to assisting refugees and internally displaced persons, especially in the Middle East and Africa. Refugees fleeing the Syrian Arab Republic were met at one of the Order's field hospitals in Turkey. Rescue teams assisted refugees and migrants travelling by boat. Asylum seekers in Europe received medical care, legal assistance and help with integration into the local population. Meanwhile, children in South Sudan received school meals, and sanitation had been improved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Uganda.

149. The Order welcomed the call for a change in the narrative of migration from discrimination and xenophobia to a recognition of the human dignity and rights of every refugee and migrant. However, the correlation between human trafficking and migration was a matter of concern. The Order therefore welcomed the forthcoming special meeting on the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and was closely following the drafting of a political declaration on that subject.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.